

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /004 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:CWSCHMIDT:JF  
APPROVED BY EUR/EE:NGANDREWS  
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION  
FOR EUR/EE ONLY; THREE COPIES ONLY  
-----056771 030158Z /73

R 021955Z JUN 78  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 140143

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM ANDREWS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

1. PERSONNEL QUESTIONS - AS A RESULT OF ART'S DISCUSSIONS WITH CARL SCHMIDT DURING LATTER'S VISIT TO BELGRADE, CARL AGREED TO CHECK ON TWO POINTS: (A) SUITABILITY OF WILLIAM B. WHITMAN, JR., AS E/C COUNSELOR VICE EVANS IN SUMMER 1979 ON ASSUMPTION THAT EVANS WOULD NOT EXTEND FOR THIRD YEAR, AND (B) WHETHER ANTHONY ARREDONDO WOULD BE PREPARED TO STAY FOR THREE YEARS IN ZAGREB, VICE HALMO.

2. WITH REGARD TO POINT (A), THE FIRST QUESTION WHICH PERSONNEL WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ANSWERED IS WHETHER OR NOT DAVID AND THE EMBASSY INTEND TO REQUEST THAT HIS TOUR BE EXTENDED FROM TWO TO THREE YEARS. PERSONNEL EXPRESSED SURPRISE WHEN CARL TOLD THEM ON HIS RETURN THAT THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY, BUT THAT DAVID WAS NOT EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO DECIDE UNTIL  
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AFTER STEFANIE HAS COMPLETED HER VISIT THIS SUMMER. PERSONNEL'S CURRENT POSITION IS THAT THEY CURTAILED DAVID'S TOUR TO TWO YEARS ON HIS REQUEST, AND, HAVING HEARD NOTHING FROM HIM TO CONTRARY, NEED TO LINE UP A LANGUAGE-QUALIFIED SUCCESSOR FOR NEXT SUMMER REPLACEMENT. THEY ARE ABOUT TO PANEL WHITMAN INTO A ONE YEAR ASSIGNMENT UNDER THE EXECUTIVE INTERCHANGE PROGRAM AND ARE ANXIOUS TO PANEL HIM FOR

THE BELGRADE JOB AS WELL, ASSUMING DAVID DOES NOT WISH TO EXTEND. WHITMAN, WHO IS DUE TO LEAVE HIS JOB THIS SUMMER AS HEAD OF THE MILAN TRADE CENTER, HAS ALREADY BEEN TOLD BY PERSONNEL OF THE BELGRADE JOB POSSIBILITY AND WANTS IT. IN ANSWER TO ART'S REQUEST TO CHECK HIM OUT, WE BELIEVE HE LOOKS VERY GOOD. HE SERVED IN THE BELGRADE E/C SECTION IN 1968-72 AND HAS SERBO-CROAT. HE STRIKES US AS A SAVY AND PERSONABLE GUY; EASY TO GET ALONG WITH. EUR/WE TELLS US THEIR IMPRESSION OF HIM FROM HIS MILAN WORK IS A VIGOROUS, INTELLIGENT PROFESSIONAL, WHO HAS SHOWN IMAGINATION AND STRONG ABILITY TO MANAGE A LARGE PROGRAM AND STAFF. THEY SAY HE HAS EARNED HIGH MARKS FROM CONSUL GENERAL TOM FINA AND FROM ROME'S E/C SECTION AS WELL. (YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK WITH RAY ALBRIGHT ON WHITMAN DURING RAY'S VISIT NEXT WEEK; BILL WORKED FOR RAY IN BELGRADE. ALSO, PERHAPS HERB KAISER OR OTHERS AT ZAGREB HAVE HAD DEALINGS WITH WHITMAN IN CONNECTION WITH ZAGREB FAIR.) IN VIEW OF ALL THIS, WE SUGGEST YOU REVIEW THE EXTENSION QUESTION AGAIN WITH DAVID. IF HE AND YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT IT, THEN PERSONNEL SHOULD BE INFORMED IN THE NORMAL PER CHANNEL (LETTING US KNOW TOO) SINCE WE GET THE STRONG SENSE THAT THEY ARE NOT INCLINED TO WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE SUMMER FOR A DECISION REGARDING EXTENSION. NOR DO THEY WANT TO HAVE WHITMAN DANGLING UNTIL THEN.

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3. WITH REGARD TO POINT (B), WE UNDERSTAND THAT ARRENDONDO HAS IN THE MEANTIME AGREED TO MAKE IT A THREE YEAR TOUR, PRESUMABLY HAVING RESOLVED THE SCHOOLING PROBLEM IN SOME FASHION. WE ASSUME YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN INFORMED VIA NORMAL PERSONNEL CHANNEL, IF THAT IS NOT A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS. ALSO, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN INFORMED VIA THE SAME ROUTE THAT JOHN G. PETERS HAS BEEN NAMED TO REPLACE SARAH NATHNESS NEXT SUMMER. WE DON'T KNOW PETERS, WHO IS NOW IN HAMBURG AND WHO SERVED IN BELGRADE IN 1960-62. PERSONNEL SAYS HE WAS THE BEST OF THE AVAILABLE CONSULAR COUNCIL CANDIDATES WITH SERBO-CROATIAN AND PRIOR EASTERN EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE. HIS LANGUAGE IS RANKED AT 3-3 LEVEL.

4. THE "WE" WHO DRAFTED PARA 3 MAY NOT KNOW PETERS BUT I REMEMBER HIM FROM WAY BACK - INTELLIGENT, BRIGHT AND PROMISING. UNFORTUNATELY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE HAS DONE WITH HIS CAREER SINCE HE LEFT BELGRADE, BUT I BELIEVE HE SHOULD FILL THE BILL. CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 02 jun 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978STATE140143  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** CWSCHMIDT:JF  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014